

# IS IT JUST ME, OR ARE WE ALL EXHAUSTED?

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# WHAT IS COMPASSION FATIGUE?

- Empathic Strain and general exhaustion resulting from dealing with people in distress over time.
  - Characterized by:
    - Physical and Emotional Exhaustion
    - Pronounced reduction in the ability to feel empathy for others
    - Pronounced reduction in the ability to feel compassion for others



# WHAT IS COMPASSION FATIGUE?

- Burnout
  - Psychological and emotional exhaustion associated with feelings of:
    - Hopelessness
    - Difficulties dealing with work
    - Difficulties doing job effectively
    - Oftentimes in the context of high caseloads
- Vicarious Traumatization
  - Negative effects of repeatedly engaging empathically with the trauma-related material of others
  - Can even bring about negative changes to the professional's fundamental beliefs about themselves, the world, or others
- Secondary Trauma
  - Psychological distress that can occur from hearing the details of another's trauma
  - Can mirror symptoms of PTSD

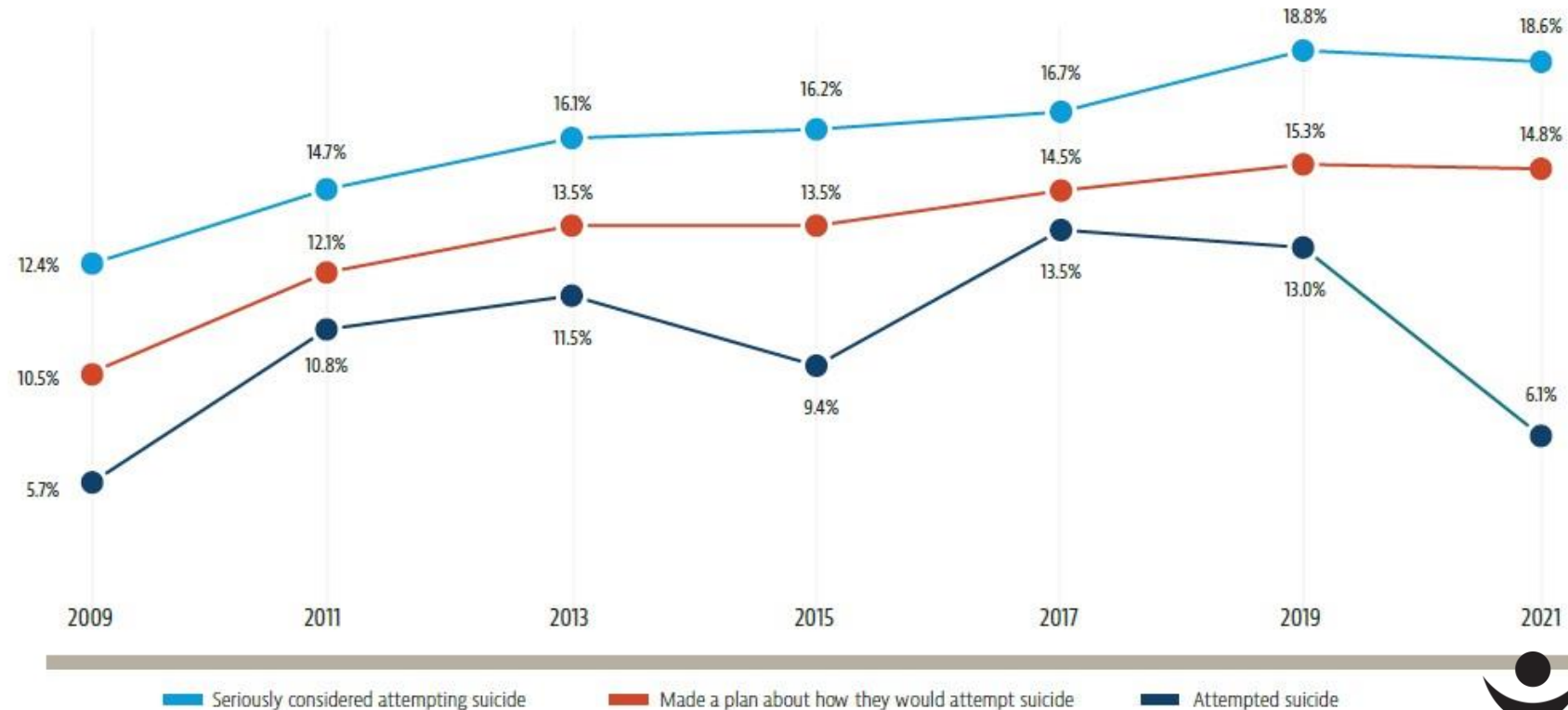
# NORTH DAKOTA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKERS

“The work conditions in social services are characterized by low salaries and excessive administrative demands combined with a large number of clients and lack of time.” (LOVAŠOVÁ 2014; BALLY & ŠIŇANSKÁ 2014)

## YOUTH

# YOUTH SUICIDE STATISTICS

NORTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS<sup>1</sup>  
(within last 12 months)



**DAKOTA**  
**FAMILY SERVICES**  
OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH CARE

# MENTAL HEALTH OF ND STUDENTS

- 35.1% of ND middle school students report feeling sad or hopeless (almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row during the past year)
- 36% of ND High School students report feeling sad or hopeless (almost every day for 2 weeks or more in a row during the past year)
  - 2011: 23.8%
- Among those who report feeling sad, hopeless, angry, or anxious, 21% of ND High School students report they would most likely talk with their parent or other adult member about their feelings.
- 28.7% of high school students report their mental health was most of the time or always not good in the last 30 days.
- 17.8% of youth (aged 12-17) had major depressive episode in the past year.
- 36.4% of high school students report living with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal at some point in their life.

# MENTAL HEALTH OF ADULTS

- 12.6% reported their mental health was NOT good, 14 or more days in the last month.
- 10% reported having a major depressive episode in the past year
- 25.79% of adults had a mental illness in the past year
  - Approximately 148,000 ND adults
- 70.6% reported a serious mental illness (Serious Functional Impairment) in the past year
  - Approximately 41,000 adults
- 19.8% received mental health services
- 148,000 clients, if we each took 30 of them on our caseload, we would need 4,934 clinicians to treat everyone.

# HUMAN SERVICE CENTER OUTPATIENT CLINICS JULY 2020-JUNE 2022

- 15,419 admissions
- 8,122 walk-in assessments
- 484,807 services to 16,629 adults
- 83,921 services to 2,152 youth and families
- Call Centers
  - 63,737 crisis calls
    - 10,107 resulted in mobile response
  - 21,018 Crisis services provided
  - 2,581 admissions to crisis residential facilities



# VULNERABILITY TO COMPASSION FATIGUE

- One's Own Trauma History
  - Most commonly associated with compassion fatigue
- Higher levels of empathy
  - Especially when combined with a history of being a victim of violent crime
  - Scores of compassion fatigue increased related to 3 subscales increasing
    - Fantasy: Tendency to transpose oneself imaginatively into the feelings of fictitious characters
    - Perspective Taking: Tendency to spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others
    - Personal Distress: Self-oriented feelings of personal anxiety in tense interpersonal settings
      - Most important to the development of compassion fatigue

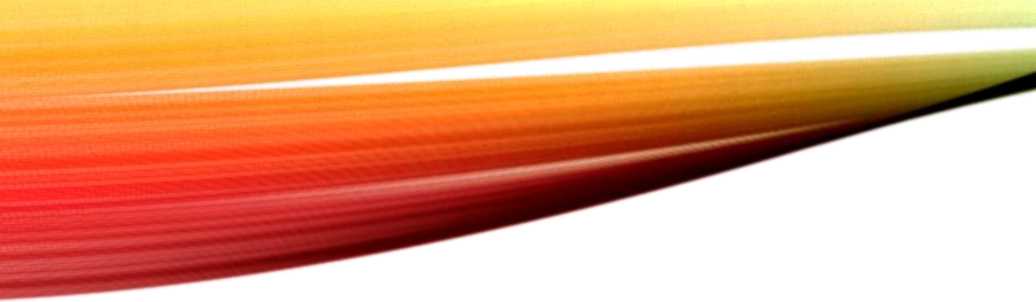
Turgoose, D., & Maddox, L. (2017). Predictors of compassion fatigue in mental health professionals: A narrative review. *Traumatology*, 23(2), 172–185. <https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000116>

# VULNERABILITY TO COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Caseload
  - Higher the caseload, more likely to develop compassion fatigue
    - Especially if your caseload is primarily filled with trauma victims
- Experience/Age
  - Mixed Research
  - More likely to experience compassion fatigue, the longer in the field
    - Especially if your field is working with those who have suffered trauma
  - Some studies suggest the longer in the field, the more coping skills you may have developed.
- Lack of coping skills

# ACTIVITY TIME

[www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com)



SO, WE ARE  
COMPASSIONATELY  
FATIGUED. NOW WHAT?



# COMBATING COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Implement Supervision
  - Supervision for the supervisors
- Increasing Self-Compassion
  - Empathy towards your own mistakes/faults
- Improving your work-life balance
- Improving boundaries
- Use of humor

# COMBATING COMPASSION FATIGUE

- What is self-care?
  - WHO: “The ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider”
    - Empowering people to take both a proactive and reactive approach to protect their own health and wellbeing
  - Physical Needs
  - Social Needs
  - Mental Health Needs
  - Emotional Needs
  - Spiritual Needs

# COMBATING COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Why is it important?
  - Improve energy
  - Calm and focused mental states
  - Increase Confidence
  - Help people recharge
  - Improve productivity
  - Help people be more effective in their daily lives
  - Help people take better care of others
  - Help relieve strained healthcare systems
  - Create a more sustainable model for the future

# COMBATING COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Employers
  - Employees who receive self-care are more productive
    - World Health Organization
  - Employee Assistance Programs
    - Encourage these
  - Encouraging mental health days
  - Checking in with your employees
    - Caseloads
    - Watching overtime
  - Encouraging and Respecting Work-Life Boundaries



# PHYSICAL NEEDS

- Exercise
  - Meet yourself where you are at
  - Start small
- Sleep
  - Go to bed on a regular schedule
  - Wake up at the same time every day
- Healthy Eating
  - Provide proper nutrients for body to feel as good as it can
- Attend regular check-ups
  - Maintain physical health and treat any illnesses

# SOCIAL NEEDS

- Spending time with friends
- Honor your social battery
  - Introverts vs. Extroverts
- Build time into your schedule to allow for social interaction outside of work
- Online vs. In person
  - What is better?
- Social Media
  - Positive and Negative Impacts
- Do what works for you

# MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

- Keep your mind sharp
  - Doing puzzles
  - Reading books
  - Researching topics
- Visit with your doctor
- Consider looking for a therapist
  - Healthy people need therapists too

# EMOTIONAL NEEDS

- Find your safe people to talk to
- Journaling
- Honor time to yourself
  - Doing hobbies
- Give yourself a break
  - Doing things by yourself can be healing
  - Parents?
- Allow for boundaries between work and home

# SPIRITUAL NEEDS

- Do things that bring meaning to your life
- Connecting with your religious beliefs
- Seeking out connection within your religious community
- Asking for support from spiritual community
- Mindfulness

# MINDFULNESS

- WHAT Skills
  - Observing – Using your 5 senses
  - Describing – What are you observing or experiencing
  - Participating – Fully engaged in what you are doing
- HOW Skills
  - One Mindfully – Being in this moment
  - Non-Judgementally – Without Judgement
  - Effectively – Doing what works

# MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY

# WHERE IS THE TIME?

- Where is the time for self-care?
  - Parents
- How to monopolize on self-care
  - Accumulating positive experiences
    - Putting these into your schedule
  - Building Mastery
    - Doing things that are challenging but not too hard
  - Mindfully
    - Being present in the moment



# ANY QUESTIONS?

Have a topic you want us to  
discuss?

Email us at:

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